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UNCLAS AMMAN 000342

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC IZ JO

SUBJECT: IOM ANNOUNCES REGISTRATION PROCEDURES AND POLLING STATIONS FOR IRAQIS IN JORDAN

REF: A. AMMAN 00293

B. AMMAN 00185

C. AMMAN 00150

D. 04 AMMAN 09898

11. (U) At a January 12 press conference in Amman, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) announced the location of twelve registration and polling stations for eligible Iraqi voters in Jordan (estimated at up to 200,000 persons) as part of its out-of-country voting (OCV) program. Eight of the stations are in Amman; the other four are in the cities of Zarqa and Irbid. Most stations will be housed in school buildings and will be open for registration from 7:00 am until 5:00 pm, January 17-23. (NOTE: Jordanian schools will begin a three-week winter break this weekend. End note.) One of the Zarqa stations will be at the Jordanian International Police Training Center to accommodate cadets being trained for the new Iraqi police. To register, eligible voters will have to present at least two acceptable forms of documentation issued by a recognized government, state agency or international institution that confirms their identity and Iraqi nationality. Approved voters must cast their ballots from January 28-30 at the same station where they registered.

12. (U) Lazhar Aloui, head of the IOM office in Amman, further announced that the IOM had recruited and trained approximately 1,000 Iraqis in Jordan to staff registration and polling stations, as well as to handle vote counting procedures. (NOTE: Post contacts reported seeing very long lines of men and women outside the IOM office seeking temporary employment in recent days. End note.) Outside of Iraq, Lazhar stated that there will be roughly 900 registration and voting centers in approximately 150 locations throughout the 14 countries participating in the OCV program.

13. (SBU) IOM advisor on Iraqi affairs Riyadh Ali said at the press conference that he &guaranteed8 there would be no legal repercussions from Jordanian authorities for Iraqis presenting expired residency permits at the registration stations. (NOTE: The Jordanian Public Security Directorate confirmed to RSO that there are no plans, at the present time, to take any action against Iraqis attempting to vote who are in the country without authorization. End note.) Information on candidates, however, is still unavailable. The English-language Jordan Times, in interviewing local Iraqis on the OCV program, quoted an unnamed Iraqi as saying: "This is nonsense...Of course I wouldn't be able to vote because I don't know who to vote for. I have heard of hundreds of candidates I know nothing about."

14. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

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